The Visual Non-Glossary

The Visual Non-Glossary helps students build language and meaning through authentic, cooperative learning.

**For every vocabulary word, the VNG provides:**

- **structured, high-quality visuals**
- **discussion prompts at different levels of Blooms' taxonomy**
- **sentence stems that incorporate academic vocabulary**
- **pre-made lesson plans that scaffold learning with QSSSA**
- **alignment to state and national learning standards**

The Visual Non-Glossary is a resource designed to make deep learning about academic concepts available to all students. This depth is achieved, in an equitable way, from rich discussions about academic content using academic vocabulary. The Visual Non-Glossary helps students master academic language in two ways:

1. Through the use of visuals, students are able to comprehend the meaning of vocabulary words in their own language and through their own schemata.

2. Through the use of structured sentence stems and references to other words, students are able to correctly practice using the words in context.

Take the example to the right. A group of four students might share the following responses:

- A *vestigial structure* originates from bones.
- A *vestigial structure* originates from *functional* body parts like legs.
- A *vestigial structure* originates from structures that were *functional* millions of years ago but lost *function* over time.
- A *vestigial structure* originates from *functional* legs a long time ago that went away because the animal stopped using it as it was evolving but is still there as a *vestigial* bone.
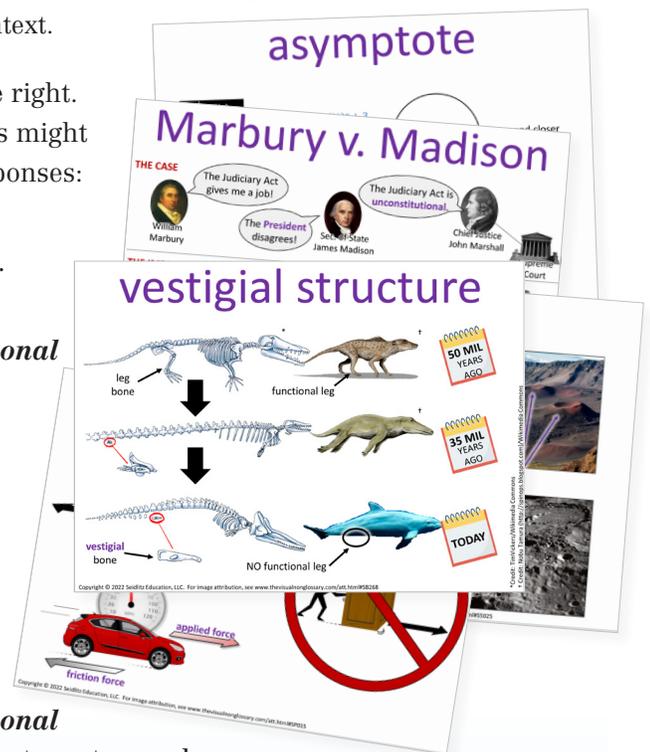
In each example, students are using the academic vocabulary word (**vestigial structure**) in context and with other vocabulary words (**functional**, for example). Additionally, students are able to hear ideas from each other and build on each other's ideas. In a bustling learning environment, the simple question "Where does a vestigial structure originate from?" turns into a rich discussion.

www.thevisualnonglossary.com

THE VISUAL NON-GLOSSARY

LANGUAGE-BUILDING APPROACH

Each vocabulary word in The Visual Non-Glossary comes with a visual aligned to learning standards at each grade level, and **each visual comes with three discussion questions and sentence stems**. The sentence stems and questions in this resource are deliberately designed to **promote students' use of academic vocabulary**. When students are given the opportunity to discuss the questions with partners or within groups, they grow their confidence and competence in pronunciation and proper usage of each word. Requiring students to use certain words in their verbal and/or written responses is effective at helping to build students' vocabulary. **Using carefully labeled visuals and asking questions which naturally encourage students to use those labels,** however, is much more effective.

That's why every sentence stem in The Visual Non-Glossary is expertly written to incorporate academic vocabulary in different contexts and in different forms. Every visual of the 3,300+ visuals in The Visual Non-Glossary represents three unique opportunities for students to be exposed to, and to practice using, an academic vocabulary word.

WHY IS IT CALLED THE "NON-GLOSSARY?"

While this resource has a list of common vocabulary words aligned to the TEKS and NGSS standards, it is in every other respect not a glossary. This resource, unlike glossaries, is not designed to provide definitions of words. The definitions found in glossaries are fixed, absolute statements which, by their nature, set a boundary or limit to student success.

The rigidness of glossaries is problematic because they

a. fail to accommodate students whose background knowledge restricts them from understanding all the terms in the way the glossary writers do, and

b. offer no opportunity for students to think any more deeply about the scientific concept than the boundary of the definition determines.

Instead of providing definitions, this resource asks questions, and provides the support (through sentence stems and visuals) that students need to infer meaning and make connections about science content. The VNG is not a glossary. **The VNG is a structure that helps students write their own glossaries and thus truly acquire their own academic language.**

WHAT MAKES THE VNG DIFFERENT?

Structured visuals allow students to infer deep meaning and make connections.

unstructured ❌ fossil

structured ✅ fossil
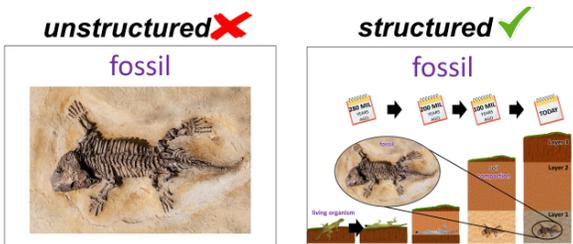
Student-centered learning through structured conversations with scaffolded discussion questions.

A focus on language
with sentence stems, labelled vocabulary, and open-ended questions that create equitable, student-centered lessons.